REVISED 3/28/2005

2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet

Type of School: X Elementary __ Middle __ High __ K-12

Name of Principal Mrs. Kathleen Ryberg
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Marine Elementary
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 550 Pine Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Marine on St. Croix | Minnesota | 55047-4417
City | State | Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Washington School Code Number* 01-0834-789

Telephone (651) 351-8870 Fax (651) 351-8877

Website/URL www.stillwater.k12.mn.us/ma/ma/ E-mail rybergk@stillwater.k12.mn.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Kathleen Macy
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Stillwater Area – District #834 Tel. (651) 351-8340

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. George Thole
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004-2005 school year.

3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award.*

5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
   9 Elementary schools
   0 Middle schools
   2 Junior high schools
   1 High schools
   4 Other: Alternative Learning Center, Charter School, and two Cooperative Schools.

   16 TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: $7,535

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: $8,450

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [**X**] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

4. 7 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   _____ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2004 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
Pre K	0	0	**0**	**7**	0	0	**0**
K	13	9	**22**	**8**	0	0	**0**
1	5	6	**11**	**9**	0	0	**0**
2	8	18	**26**	**10**	0	0	**0**
3	12	8	**20**	**11**	0	0	**0**
4	9	15	**24**	**12**	0	0	**0**
5	9	8	**17**	**Other**	0	0	**0**
6	13	16	**29**				
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →					**149**

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:

99 % White
_____ % Black or African American
_____ % Hispanic or Latino
1 % Asian/Pacific Islander
_____ % American Indian/Alaskan Native
100% Total

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 4 %

(This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.)

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1, 2003 until June 9, 2004	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October , 2003 until June 9, 2004	2
(3)	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2003	157
(5)	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	.038
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4%

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0 %
0 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 1
Specify languages: English

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 5

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
    12 Total Number of Students Served

    Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

____Autism	____Orthopedic Impairment
____Deafness	____Other Health Impaired
____Deaf-Blindness	4 Specific Learning Disability
____Emotional Disturbance	8 Speech or Language Impairment
____Hearing Impairment	____Traumatic Brain Injury
____Mental Retardation	____Visual Impairment Including Blindness
____Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

Number of Staff

	Full-time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)		1
Classroom teachers	6	1
Special resource teachers/specialists		6
Paraprofessionals		2
Support staff	1	3
Total number	7	13

12. Average school student-"classroom teacher" ratio: 22:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Daily student attendance	96 %	97 %	97 %	97 %	96 %
Daily teacher attendance	96 %	95 %	97 %	Not available	
Teacher turnover rate	4 %	0 %	4 %	4 %	4 %
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
Student drop-off rate (high school)	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*

PART III - SUMMARY

Up the hill from the village of Marine on St. Croix you will find Marine Elementary. A huge mosaic in the media center depicts the past and present historical buildings in town, the St. Croix River, and the natural habitat of the area. Over 150 tiles made by individual students make up this mosaic. It captures the beauty and history of the area which are truly valued by residents of all ages.

In a survey, students indicated they felt safe and welcome at Marine School. They view their teachers as being supportive and fun. One student remarked that “teachers give a lot of homework but it pays off.” Parents believe Marine is the "best kept secret in the district". They describe Marine as a "small school that delivers big".

Our mission is to have a school where high achievement for all learners is expected, positive relationships are developed, risk is sanctioned and opportunities for choice are provided.

Teachers at Marine exemplify hardworking, caring educators who are dedicated to students growing and succeeding. Over 70% of the teachers have seven or more years of teaching experience at the school. This consistency in staff has resulted in teachers working collaboratively on best instructional practices, examining student data and providing curriculum based upon student needs as well as district and state standards.

There are wonderful traditions at Marine School which parents and students look forward to each year. One is the sixth-grade play held at the town hall in the spring. Sixth graders anxiously await the announcement of what production they will be performing. The sell-out crowds are always appreciative of the students' musical and acting talents. Another tradition involves each kindergartener having a sixth-grade buddy all year long. They look forward to lunch and recess together twice a month and other "buddy events" throughout the year. Other traditions include the all-school picnic and the Winter Olympics.

Many wonderful opportunities for students exist because of partnerships with others in the community. The parent organization works closely with the staff to fund projects that correlate directly with our school improvement plan. Parents have designed a brochure outlining the positive attributes of the learning experience at Marine and one parent writes a bi-monthly article for local newspapers about activities at Marine School. City workers maintain the ice rink and tennis courts on the school grounds. The Lions club provides dictionaries for every third grader to have at home. Students work with naturalists from two environmental centers in the area. A local resident who was a former student awards an annual scholarship to a sixth grader based upon the student's writing skills. A retired teacher volunteers every Friday to help in the media center.

One word that describes the interpersonal relationships among people involved in the Marine School is teamwork. Community members strongly support the work of students and educators at Marine School. Parents send their children to school with high expectations for learning. Both the students and the teachers meet those expectations.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN READING & MATHEMATICS

Marine is a school with high achieving students!

- Reading, 96% of third graders achieved at or above grade level – 83% were above grade level.
- Reading, 100% of fifth graders achieved above grade level.
- Math, 88% of third graders achieved at or above grade level – 71% were above grade level.
- Math, 100% of fifth graders achieved above grade level.
- Writing, 100% of fifth graders achieved above grade level.

All Minnesota public elementary schools must participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). These assessments meet the requirements of the Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act and are used to evaluate district, school and individual student progress on the state high standards in mathematics and reading. Last year the tests were administered to all students in grades 3 and 5 with grades 4 and 6 being added this year. Although students do not pass or fail the MCA, students must achieve a Level 3 or above on the five Level scale to be considered proficient on the state standards. Below are the descriptors for the five Levels.

- Level 1 - Gaps in knowledge and skills. Students scoring in this level typically are working significantly below grade-level in one or more content areas.
- Level 2 - Partial knowledge and skills. Students scoring in this level are working typically at or slightly below grade-level in one or more content areas.
- Level 3 - Solid grade level skills. Students scoring in this level are progressing with their peers in understanding the content material at grade level.
- Level 4 - Working above grade level. Students at this level demonstrate solid performance and competence in the knowledge and skills necessary for satisfactory work in the state's content standards. Students in this level are typically in the top 25% nationally.
- Level 5 - Superior performance beyond grade level. Students at this level demonstrate achievement well beyond what is expected at the grade level. Students are typically in the top 5-10% on national tests.

The reading test consists of multiple choice and open-response items in the strands of main idea, information processing, inference, compare/contrast, and analysis.

2003-2004 Reading Results		
	Grade 3 (% of students)	Grade 5 (% of students)
Level 1	0	0
Level 2	4	0
Level 3	13	0
Level 4	54	17
Level 5	29	83

The math test consists of multiple choice and open-response items in the strands of shape/space/measurement, number sense, data categorization, problem solving, and procedures/concepts.

	2003-2004 Math Results		**2003-2004 Writing Results**
	Grade 3 (% of students)	Grade 5 (% of students)	Grade 5 (% of students)
Level 1	0	0	0
Level 2	13	0	0
Level 3	17	0	0
Level 4	50	53	7
Level 5	21	47	93

Minnesota State Statute also requires the assessment of writing skills of students in grade 5 – MCA in Written Composition. In the writing test, students are asked to provide a written response to one of four types of writing prompts – descriptive, narrative, problem solution or clarification. Students' writing is scored on composing, style, sentence formation, usage/grammar, and mechanics/spelling. Students must achieve a Level 3 or above to be proficient.

There is no subgroup information because there are not sufficient numbers to be statistically significant. Further information regarding the Minnesota Comprehension Tests can be found at ww.education.state.mn.us

2. USING ASSESSMENT DATA TO UNDERSTAND & IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

What do we know? How does that link to what we are doing? Are we getting the results we want? **Assessment data drives the decisions we make regarding these three questions.** All teachers at Marine review a variety of student data at the beginning of each school year. The data provides a school-wide view of student behavior, attendance, academic performance and social dynamics. One key component of the data is the MCA test results. All of this data provides us with answers to the question regarding "what do we know?" The next step is to reflect upon our school improvement plans and make changes or additions that may be needed. The stage is set for the Marine teachers to consistently analyze what we do and adjust to get better. In mid-September there are half-day meetings with cross-grade level teachers to look at specific grade-level and individual student data. The MCA tests and results from an achievement leveled test provide us with much of the data. Teachers who have already worked with the students talk to the new teachers. Individual growth targets and grade level targets drive the discussion about instructional materials and programs the teachers will use. Additional meetings take place throughout the year. Data from pre-tests, unit tests, fluency tests, phonological assessments and word study evaluations are discussed. Not only does this data help the current teacher determine pacing and type of instruction, it also helps future teachers prioritize what concepts need further emphasis.

Since the results of the first MCA tests in 1998, educators in the district have designed an aligned K-12 curriculum in which the state standards are embedded in all content areas.

As a school we have increased the amount of instructional time for reading and math. After reviewing specific grade-level standards, we have increased teaching emphasis for specific concepts in reading, writing and math. There is greater communication regarding teaching materials and concepts between the special education teacher and the classroom teachers. Additional materials and programs have been added.

At Marine there is a colloquial focus on student data. Teachers regularly discuss instructional challenges and their solutions. As a result, teaching has improved and student achievement has improved.

3. COMMUNICATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT DATA TO THE PUBLIC

Sharing information and empowering students and parents to share ownership in our goals, is key to our success with student learning. At the first parent meeting in the fall, the principal shares a summary of all the school data which was presented to staff members in August. School improvement plans are also discussed. The parent organization uses this information to guide decisions regarding funding activities throughout the year.

When the teachers have their conferences with parents and students in November, a variety of assessment data is reviewed. Examples include test results from a leveled achievement test and the

MCA test. In addition, a phonological/phonics assessment is reviewed with parents who have students in kindergarten through second grade. Academic goals for individual students are set. Other goals may include attendance, behavior or study skills. Throughout the year teachers meet with students about their progress. Report cards are sent to parents three times a year. The bi-monthly school newsletter and the school website are other vehicles for sharing school assessment data. Some parents will be asked to attend a spring conference to discuss their child's progress and ideas for maintaining learning over the summer.

One week in the spring is proclaimed "Celebrate Marine School Week". Community members and families outside of the attendance area are invited to come in and tour the school and speak with teachers and parent leaders. Posters with academic data are displayed in the hallway and a colorful brochure is available for all interested parties. A visitors' book filled with informative data about the school is another way of sharing information with guests.

Two years ago, school board members held their meeting at Marine School and listened to a presentation about student achievement. This was an opportunity for board members to ask questions about the school improvement plan and how it linked to the district goals they had set.

The district assessment director shares district student assessment data with school board members. Local cable TV, newspapers, a district newsletter twice a year and the website are all vehicles used for communicating this information to community members. The school website has a link to information from the Minnesota Department of Education if citizens wish to access more information regarding MCA results. The superintendent also writes a weekly column for the newspaper that often features a variety of information regarding student achievement.

4. SHARING SUCCESSES WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

It is imperative that all teachers in the district belong to a professional learning community that recognizes and capitalizes on the skills of all the teachers. The Marine teachers work with teachers from a neighboring school several times a year. While each grade level examines their own school assessment data, rich discussions take place regarding materials and teaching strategies that are being used to meet student needs. Sharing success stories and asking others for suggestions are opportunities for growth. This year many of the grade-level teams from the "sister school" will meet for four hours of staff development time to discuss and plan how to effectively implement the new reading program. Often tasks are divided so the process of creating new materials is more efficient for all. In March teachers from every school in the district will meet in grade level teams to share ideas and success stories regarding the teaching of reading.

Throughout the year the principals discuss student performance and share information about programs in their schools that have led to increased student achievement. The district math and reading coordinators work with principals and teachers who wish to change or add instructional components to meet the needs of students. The two coordinators are resource people who share ideas they have heard from other schools. In the spring of 2005 the Marine teachers will complete a report outlining a three-year action research study in math. This report will be shared with many others. The principal has made presentations to different groups of educators, including graduate students studying to be administrators, about the use of data to increase student performance.

Collegial interdependence is a key component for all educators growing and making changes that will benefit students. Sharing and listening are how we conduct business at Marine School.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. CORE CURRICULUM AREAS BASED ON HIGH STANDARDS

The foundation of the curriculum at Marine School is based on Minnesota state standards and district outcomes. There is a direct link between what we teach and what we test. While each grade level has designated curriculum in all content areas, teachers monitor and adjust to accommodate the needs of individual students. Volunteers, specialists and resource people work along side of the classroom teacher to offer remedial and enrichment opportunities.

The reading program incorporates the five areas of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel Report--phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Students read and discuss quality literature while learning the skills. Our goal is for students to be confident, motivated and successful readers.

Writing, spelling and grammar are also interwoven in the reading program. Beginning in kindergarten, students write in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences. Teachers help students develop writing skills for narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive writing. The spelling program incorporates word study and high frequency words. Students are held accountable for spelling these words correctly in their daily writing. We want students to apply writing, grammar and spelling skills in written and spoken communication.

Another goal is that students demonstrate accuracy and efficiency in computing numbers and problem solving. Our primary students spend a great deal of time learning mathematical foundations by manipulating objects and solving problems related to their world. Math skills in the older grades build upon that foundation. Traditional algorithms as well as using different strategies to solve problems are two components of the math program. A student's rapid recall of the basic facts is monitored and evaluated from grade three to grade six.

The social studies curriculum begins with a study of family and neighborhood in kindergarten and evolves to the study of US history and world civilizations in the upper grades. Responsible citizenship and acceptance of differences are two themes woven throughout the seven years of curriculum. Often teachers will link an area of study in social studies to a novel in reading class. Frequently students will explore specific concepts more in depth as individuals or small groups and then report their findings to the class. Current events are discussed on a regular basis.

Hands-on learning with an inquiry base describes the FOSS science program. All grade levels explore physical, life and earth science concepts. Students predict, experiment, record findings and solve problems. The learning takes place in small cooperative groups. Often each member of the group has an assigned task. It is an environment where students can follow their curiosity and build a knowledge base focused on meaningful concepts. The study of science concepts is linked with non-fiction reading and writing.

There are always opportunities in music class to sing, dance and play instruments. Students are introduced to a variety of music and learn listening skills so they are able to discuss the work with others. Performance for an audience is another part of the music program. Each grade level has a concert for parents and the entire school body performs together on stage once a year. The annual sixth grade play provides students with the unique opportunity to perform in a musical at the town hall. Fantastic costumes, strong voices and imaginative choreography result in sell-out crowds for three evenings. For the past three years the fifth and sixth graders have been invited to sing at a production

with the high school orchestra.

The physical education program emphasizes fitness and team building. Many teachers schedule breaks during the day for brief "oxygen runs". This correlates with information about brain research that short bits of exercise to raise the heart rate is beneficial to learning.

Our Spanish curriculum is unique. It is taught by a young adult from a foreign country that stays with a Marine family during the year. This year the intern teacher is from Peru. The children are immersed in Spanish dialogue. The main goal is to have the students able to converse in Spanish on a basic level and to learn about a different culture.

2. READING CURRICULUM

Marine participates in the district's reading program, which is consistent across all nine elementary schools. The program was chosen because it is a research-based, developmental reading program for kindergarten through sixth grade focusing on the components recommended by the National Reading Panel—Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. It consists of high-quality, children's literature and informational texts; promotes the systematic teaching of skills and strategies; and provides diagnostic tools, instructional support, and intervention strategies. The program is linked to state and national standards and to language arts lessons that help students develop writing forms; grammar, usage, and mechanics skills; and spelling generalizations.

Learning experiences within the reading program include read aloud, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. Teachers read books aloud to children on a daily basis. This is a wonderful way to model fluency and expression. They also make sure they read a variety of genres. In guided reading, small groups of students receive direct instruction in their specific reading needs. Fluency, reading strategies and skills are all addressed in these small groups. There is a balance between fiction and non-fiction texts. Struggling readers also receive intervention help from the "Read with Me" teacher and the special education teacher.

A critical factor in the success of the reading program is continuing staff development. Teachers participate in district workshops, school and grade-level meetings, and in-class observations provided by literacy coaches.

Reading expectations for students go beyond the school day. All students are expected to read at home. Parents are asked to monitor this request. Parents also model the importance of being life-long readers by taking turns coming into the classrooms and reading chapters from their favorite books. A community book fair each year at school is another example where families demonstrate the enjoyment of selecting new and used books to add to their personal collections at home.

More time is spent on teaching reading than any other subject at Marine School. Last year the instructional time was increased to two hours. Teaching a child to be a good reader is a skill that lasts a lifetime.

3. SCIENCE CURRICULUM SUPPORTS THE SCHOOL'S MISSION

The science curriculum at Marine is a hands-on, inquiry-based program using FOSS kits and curriculum created with partnerships with local environmental organizations. Students question, observe, organize data, explain, reflect and take action to solve problems. Students use reading, writing and math skills in the science program. Every grade level studies physical, life and earth science.

Marine has a partnership with a local nature center. Teachers have worked with naturalists to create field trip experiences that correlate directly with district curriculum. A naturalist visits the classroom prior to each field trip to teach and discuss the up-coming science experiences at the nature center. The parent organization funds the naturalist visits for each grade level.

In addition, our fifth and sixth graders work with naturalists at the Marine Water Management Organization on a project called Watershed Wisdom Project. The mission of the program is to inspire youth to care for the St. Croix Watershed and empower them to take action that will support a healthy watershed. Last year the students did restoration work at an old minnow pond in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Students learned about restoration of a trout stream and helped plant nature species.

All aspects of the science program at Marine are focused on students demonstrating an understanding, interest and appreciation of the world in which they live. We want students to realize the impact of being good stewards of their environment.

4. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS USED TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

The criteria to determine instructional methods are directly related to the learning needs of the students. Decisions about instructional methods become "situational" and flexible. There is large group instruction in all of the content areas to introduce new curriculum. However, the key to meeting individual student needs lies in small and flexible instruction groups. Grade-level curriculum and individual student assessment drives the content of the instruction and the delivery of the instruction.

Students are taught reading in large and small groups in the classroom. Teachers know the reading levels of each child from the achievement leveled test and select appropriate reading materials for different groups of students. Recent reading training and work with a reading consultant have empowered teachers to design lessons where students are actively manipulating the content, are experiencing 70% success and are aware of the purpose of the lesson. Often children are working and learning cooperatively in pairs or groups. Centers allow students to be working independent of the teacher in a focused and structured environment. A special program called Read With Me enables an additional teacher to work with the classroom teacher with students who are struggling in the early grades with reading. A reading class before school twice a week is another intervention we provide for increasing student performance in reading. The special education teacher coordinates her schedule with the classroom teachers so reading goals on the Individual Education Plans can be implemented in conjunction with the classroom reading time. This year the special education teacher is actually "front loading" the curriculum so the child works with the concepts a week prior to actually having it presented by the classroom teacher. As a result, the children feel much more confident about participating in the regular classroom. In all of these programs, the specialists discuss student needs with the classroom teacher and then present the curriculum in different ways and with different materials.

Consistency in instructional methods across all grade levels is another part of the teaching methods at Marine. All the teachers use a consistent comprehension strategy and writing strategy in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. This approach results in students knowing the terminology and expectations from one grade level to the next.

Math instruction is large group and individual progress. Some teachers use pretests to gain more information about what the children already know and what they need. A computer software program allows students to work on math problems in a continuous progress model. Teachers monitor each

child's progress and reinforce concepts when needed. Some students receive additional math instruction because the assessment results indicate they are ready for higher level concepts.

Whatever the curriculum area, teachers design lessons where there are opportunities for students to problem solve and apply learning to real-life situations. Graphing, recording data, and making change are some examples of this.

In addition, resource people provide unique instructional methods. Our Spanish classes are taught by an intern teacher from Peru who immerses the students in Spanish dialogue. The naturalists who team teach with the classroom teachers often use demonstrations as an instructional method.

Just as our students learn in different ways, we provide instruction in different ways.

5. HOW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPROVES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Professional development at Marine occurs at both the school level and the district level. There is a direct link between our school improvement goals and our professional development goals. We begin with student data as we start planning staff development activities. Ultimately we evaluate the success of those activities based on changes in student achievement.

MCA test data indicated that less than 80% of the third graders scored at or above proficiency level from 1998- 2000 in reading and math. Different test data indicated that in some of the grade levels students were not meeting their growth targets in reading and math. As a result, our main focus of professional development was providing differentiated instruction in math and reading.

Teachers meet to review the state standards by scrutinizing specific skills which are being assessed on the MCA's. Teachers are using new materials, new assessments and additional programs to better meet the needs of students. For example, teachers in all grade levels are making sure there are ample materials to use to teach inferential comprehension. Two years ago we increased the amount of instructional time devoted to math and reading across all grade levels.

For the first time we have a district-wide reading program that includes leveled books and specific ideas for teachers to manage small group instruction. Over the span of two years, all elementary teachers have participated in training in reading. A key component to this training is working with a consultant and the principal who both serve as coaches. The coaches monitor and provide feedback to teachers as they implement new teaching strategies. Research has proven that this model will help to sustain the new practices. Providing opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively on the new reading program is another professional development activity which occurs on a school level and a district level.

In math we have looked at specific skills which are part of the state standards and made sure we are teaching and assessing them in a sequential and consistent manner.

The third grade MCA reading scores have increased. For the past four years more than 80% of the third graders have scored at/above the proficiency level. The same is true for third grade math scores the last two years.

According to Ernest Boyer, "When you talk about school improvement you're talking about people improvement". At Marine, teachers are eager to enhance their teaching skills because they know it will make a difference in the lives of students.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

***Subgroup scores are not applicable to our group.**

Subject READING Grade 3 Test MN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS

Edition/Publication Year N/A Publisher

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	96	82	93	85	78
% At Advanced	83	73	83	70	48
Number of students tested	24	22	29	20	23
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	91	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
STATE SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	73	73	67	67	62
% At Advanced	60	56	49	49	45

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS- Continued

Subject MATHEMATICS Grade 3 Test MN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS

Edition/Publication Year N/A Publisher

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	88	86	79	64	78
% At Advanced	71	68	55	55	43
Number of students tested	24	22	29	22	23
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
STATE SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	70	72	65	66	65
% At Advanced	55	56	48	53	46

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS- Continued

Subject READING Grade 5 Test MN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS

Edition/Publication Year N/A Publisher

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	100	88	96	94	89
% At Advanced	100	76	92	88	78
Number of students tested	30	25	24	17	27
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
STATE SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	76	77	75	74	67
% At Advanced	64	64	64	63	52

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS- Continued

Subject MATHEMATICS Grade 5 Test MN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS

Edition/Publication Year N/A Publisher

	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001	1999-2000
Testing month	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH	MARCH
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	100	96	91	82	89
% At Advanced	100	72	83	65	81
Number of students tested	30	25	23	17	27
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
STATE SCORES					
% At or Above Basic	100	100	100	100	100
% At or Above Proficient	74	75	70	67	62
% At Advanced	59	60	53	51	46